DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 338 762 UD 028 388

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INSTITUTION Houston Independent School District, TX. Dept. of Research and Evaluation.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 55p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; Attendance; Dropout Prevention; Educational Assessment; *High Risk Students; High School Students; Intermediate Grades; Middle Schools; *Nontraditional Education; Program Evaluation; School Districts; *School Effectiveness; School Holding Power; Secondary Education; Student Characteristics; *Urban Schools; Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS *Houston Independent School District TX

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the seven alternative schools in the Houston (Texas) Independent School District by describing the students who were served by the programs, and by assessing the effectiveness of the programs in improving student academic performance and attendance. The following schools provide education to at-risk students in an effort to reduce their dropout rate: H. P. Carter Career Center, Contemporary Learning Center (CLC), Foley's Academy, Harper Alternative School, Harris County Youth Village, Houston Night High School, and Kay On-Going Education Center. All of these schools serve high school students, with Harper, Youth Village, and Kay having limited middle school components. CLC has the only alternative middle school. Ten research questions are proposed and answers are supplied in 10 sections, each of which discusses methodology and findings for one question. In summary, answers to the research show the following: (1) the schools offer a wide range of programs; (2) the referral and selection criteria are unique to each school; (3) enrollment is near capacity; (4) there is a high level of mobility among students; (5) demographic and academic characteristics vary from school to school; (6) the dropout rate is 23%, and 100 students graduated; (7) faculty and staff showed various levels of tenure and training; (8) the schools offer various benefits to students; and (9) faculty and staff have suggestions for better serving students. Eleven tables and one bar graph are provided. Appended are a copy of the teacher questionnaire and complete answers to two survey questions. This document contains six references. (JB)

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An Evaluation of the Alternative Schools 1990–91

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HISD RESEARCH & EVALUATION
HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AN EVALUATION OF THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS 1990–91

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Throughout the last twenty years, HISD has developed a wide variety of alternative academic programs to provide education to a growing population of at-risk students in an effort to reduce their dropout rate. This effort has included the creation of seven alternative schools which were in operation during the 1990–91 school year. These alternative schools were H.P. Carter Career Center (Carter), Contemporary Learning Center (CLC), Foley's Academy (Foley's), Harper Alternative School (Harper), Harris County Youth Village (Youth Village), Houston Night High School (Night H.S.), and Kay On-Going Education Center (Kay). Each school was designed to serve students who, for whatever reason, could not function in the traditional school setting. All of these schools serve high school students with Harper, Youth Village, and Kay having limited middle school components. CLC has the only alternative middle school.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The purpose of this report was to describe the students who were served by the program and to assess the effectiveness of the program in improving student academic performance and attendance. The following research questions were addressed:

Research Question 1: What programs were offered and what services were available to students at each of the alternative schools?

There were a wide variety of programs and services offered for at-risk students at each of the alternative schools. Please see *An Evaluation of Alternative Schools* pages 7–12 for a complete description.

Research Question 2: What were the referral or selection criteria for students attending each campus?

The referral and/or selection criteria is unique for each of the alternative schools as they are designed to serve different at-risk populations. Please see *An Evaluation of Alternative Schools* pages 13–14 for a complete description.

Research Question 3: What was the capacity of each alternative school program and what was the enrollment during the 1990–91 school year?

The total capacity of the alternative schools was 1,961. An enrollment snapshot taken on October 12, 1990 showed 1,655 students enrolled in the alternative schools; each was operating near capacity with Kay operating at 32 students over capacity. The cumulative enrollment for the 1990–91 school year for these schools was 2,964. The average length of stay was 98 days.

Research Question 4: What was the mobility of the students who attended the alternative schools?

The largest percentage of students from CLC M.S. (39%) entered at the beginning of the year and exited before the end of the school year. The largest percentage of students who attended Carter (46%), CLC H.S. (28%), Foley's (37%), Harper (37%), Youth Village (36%), and Night H.S. (52%) entered at some time during the school year and stayed until the end of the year. Forty-seven percent of the student population at Kay entered during the school year and left before the end of the year. On the whole, only 12% of the students attending alternative schools entered a school at the beginning of the year and stayed at that school until the end of the year.

Research Question 5: What were the demographic characteristics of students who enrolled at each school?

CLC M.S., Harper, and the Youth Village served a larger percentage of male students than the other schools. Except for Kay, the other schools appeared to have a fairly even distribution of male to female students. Foley's and the Youth Village appeared to have ethnically diverse populations. Carter, CLC M.S., CLC H.S., Harper, and Kay served a larger percentage of Black students (67%, 80%, 83%, 58%, and 67% respectively) while Night H.S. served a larger percentage of Hispanic students (62%). The high schools, Carter, CLC, Foley's, Harper, and Night H.S., had students with seven to nine year age spans. CLC M.S. had a seven year age span from 11 to 17 years of age, the Youth Village had a six year age span from 12 to 17 years of age, and Kay had an 11 year age span with students from 11 through 22 years of age. The average age of students at each of the schools was: Carter - 17.0, CLC M.S. - 14.2, CLC H.S. - 16.8, Foley's - 16.7, Harper - 15.9, Youth Village - 14.4, Night H.S. - 17.7, and Kay - 15.9.

Research Question 6: What were the academic characteristics of students who enrolled at each school?

Of the 2,964 students who enrolled in alternative schools during 1990–91, 458 had complete MAT6 results. It must be remembered that students are accepted into each of the alternative schools based on different selection and referral criteria. Consequently, the results should not be compared across schools, but used to profile the academic characteristics of the students attending the schools as measured by the MAT6 standardized test. Foley's students scored in the 50th and 60th percentiles, scoring markedly better on

the total reading subtest. The students at the other alternative schools scored in the 30th and 40th percentiles. The Night H.S. students scored higher on total math than on total reading or the complete battery. The students at Carter, CLC H.S., Youth Village, and Kay scored higher on total reading than on total math or the complete battery.

Research Question 7: What were the dropout and graduation rates for each alternative school?

The dropout rate for all of the alternative schools declined from 1987–88 to 1988–89 at an average of 23%; it ranged from 20% to 88% in 1987–88 and from 8% to 35% in 1988–89. The dropout rate for four of the schools continued to decline from 1988–89 to 1989–90 at an average of 7% while the dropout rate for the other four schools increased by an average of 6%. The dropout rate for 1989–90 ranged from 10% to 42%. Thirty students who had dropped out of school during the 1989–90 school year enrolled in an alternative school during 1990–91. In addition, 100 students graduated this year from an alternative school.

Research Question 8: What staff was used to operate each school, and what were the training and experience levels of the teachers at each school?

The staff used to operate each of the alternative schools is listed in *An Evaluation of Alternative Schools* on pages 25–26. Most of the teachers employed at the alternative schools have been there for one to six years. At six of the seven schools, the largest percentage of teachers have been employed by the district for over 10 years. All of the teachers interviewed at CLC, Foley's, Youth Village, and Night H.S. had obtained a bachelor's degree. Over 50% of the teachers at CLC, Harper, Youth Village, Night H.S., and Kay had received advanced degrees.

Research Question 9: In what ways did administrators and teachers perceive that the program was benefiting students?

The perceived benefits to students attending alternative schools which were mentioned by the administrators and teachers at more than half of the schools were that alternative schools:

1. provide individualized academic instruction,
2. build students' self-esteem,
3. allow for individual attention to students' problems/ flexibility for staff to handle situations,
4. are staffed by caring and attentive professionals,
5. have smaller classes which allow for one-on-one attention,
6. keep students in school who would have dropped out/these students would not be in school had it not been for the alternative school,
7. provide access to good vocational programs,
8. fit the needs of students who cannot function in a traditional school setting,

9. help students become more responsible for themselves/learn to work independently,
10. improve students' attitude toward school and teachers,
11. provide students the opportunity to develop social skills and learn how to interact with others, and
12. provide at-risk students the opportunity to experience successes.

Research Question 10: What recommendations did the administrators and teachers make to better serve the students?

The recommendations as to how the alternative schools could better serve the students which were mentioned by the administrators and teachers at more than half of the alternative schools were:

1. more training for staff on behavior management and at-risk students,
2. more extra-curricular activities including field trips and speakers,
3. more psychological counseling and support services for students,
4. alternative schools should not be held to same rules and guidelines as traditional schools, especially for enrollment guidelines and teacher:pupil ratios,
5. hazard pay for teachers,
6. more alternative schools,
7. more funding in general,
8. more public recognition and understanding of alternative schools,
9. more teachers/smaller class size because students could not function in traditional setting to begin with, and
10. more incentives for attendance/improve attendance.

AN EVALUATION OF THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS 1990–91

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Abstract

HISD's alternative schools provide a wide variety of academic programs to a growing population of at-risk students in an effort to reduce their dropout rate. Each of the seven schools were designed to serve students who, for whatever reason, could not function in traditional schools. The purpose of this evaluation was to describe the programs offered at the alternative schools and to assess their effectiveness.

Introduction

Throughout the last twenty years, HISD has developed a wide variety of alternative academic programs to provide education to a growing population of at-risk students in an effort to reduce their dropout rate. This effort has included the creation of seven alternative schools which were in operation during the 1990–91 school year. HISD's alternative schools are H.P. Carter Career Center (Carter), Contemporary Learning Center (CLC), Foley's Academy (Foley's), Harper Alternative School (Harper), Harris County Youth Village (Youth Village), Houston Night High School (Night H.S.), and Kay On-Going Education Center (Kay). Each school was designed to serve students who, for whatever reason, could not function in the traditional school setting. All of these schools serve high school students with Harper, Youth Village, and Kay having limited middle school components. CLC has the only alternative middle school.

The alternative schools are administered by principals or directors under the authority of the administrative district superintendent where the school is located. The Bureau of Alternative Schools and Programs acts in an advisory capacity to the principals or administrators of the alternative schools. It has also developed proposed district guidelines for alternative schools for at-risk students, similar to those developed by the TEA, which have not yet been adopted.

The TEA provides guidelines under which school districts may operate alternative schools. Under these guidelines, it is stated that alternative schools may be designed to serve students who are "A) not able to function in the structure of a regular school setting; B) potential drop-outs; or C) discipline problems." Tex. Educ. Agency, 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 75.164(c)(1) (West 1988)

(Experimental Courses, Magnet Programs, and Alternative School Programs). These guidelines further state that:

- Targeted students should meet "at-risk" criteria.[1]
- Alternative programs need to meet the individual needs of the student.
- The entry and exit criteria need to be clearly defined, consistently applied, and in written form.
- The curriculum must be flexible so as to provide for a range of student needs, e.g., remedial or gifted/talented.
- Students who have demonstrated achievement by meeting the standard requirements of the essential elements will be awarded credit, regardless of the time the student has been enrolled in the course.
- The attendance requirements should address the 80 days absence legislation and State Board of Education rules.
- The teacher/student ratio should be effective in providing for the individual needs of students and significantly lower than that of the regular class.
- Guidance services shall be considered part of the educational program.
- The program of guidance services shall provide for counseling, consultation, coordination, and student appraisal to meet the educational, vocational, and personal-social needs of students.[2]

The specific tasks of this report were to describe the programs offered at HISD's alternative schools and to assess their effectiveness. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What programs were offered and what services were available to students at each of the alternative schools? (See page 7.)

2. What were the referral or selection criteria for students attending each campus? (See page 13.)

3. What was the capacity of each alternative school program and what was the enrollment during the 1990–91 school year? (See page 15.)

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[1] To be classified as "at-risk," a student must meet one or more of the following conditions:
1) has been retained one or more times in grades 1–6;
2) is two or more years below grade level in reading or mathematics;
3) is of limited English proficiency;
4) failed one or more sections of the most recent TEAMS/TAAS test; and
5) failed at least two courses in one or more semesters.
Summarized from Tex. Educ. Agency, 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 75.195 (West Supp. 1990) (Alternatives to Social Promotion).

[2] **Guidelines for Alternative Education Programs**, Department of Special Programs Planning, Texas Education Agency, draft 10/90. Synthesized from Tex. Educ. Agency, 19 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 61.65, 75.164, 75.195, 89.41, 97.96 (West 1988 & Supp. 1991).

4. What was the mobility of the students who attended the alternative schools? (See page 17.)

5. What were the demographic characteristics of students who enrolled at each school? (See page 19.)

6. What were the academic characteristics of students who enrolled at each school? (See page 21.)

7. What were the dropout and graduation rates for each alternative school? (See page 23.)

8. What staff was used to operate each school, and what were the training and experience levels of the teachers at each school? (See page 25.)

9. In what ways did administrators and teachers perceive that the program was benefiting students? (See page 29.)

10. What recommendations did the administrators and teachers make to better serve the students? (See page 32.)

Review of Literature

A review of the literature indicates that alternative high schools, in general, are characterized by a low student-teacher ratio, flexible scheduling, and easily accessible counseling (Kagan, 1988). They have also been used to develop experimental curricula for gifted and talented students, disruptive students, students from different cultures, and students interested in a multitude of careers (Meyers, 1988). An alternative school is one in which students and staff are there by choice, is an alternative rather than a supplement to a regular school program, has its own distinctive mission which sets it apart from other schools, and is a separate administrative unit (Raywid, 1988).

One of the roles of alternative high schools is to provide educational opportunities for students who are not suited for or cannot return to traditional high schools. This includes pregnant students, students who have dropped out or failed so often that they are now over-age and feel out of place in the traditional school, and students who are not allowed admission to the traditional high schools because of disciplinary problems (Meyers, 1988). According to Hamilton (1981), both gifted students and school dropouts have been shown to learn better in alternative schools than they did in traditional schools.

Different types of alternative schools have emerged in the past few decades. These include:

- open schools -- learning activities and centers that are individualized and organized around interest centers within the classroom or building;
- schools-without-walls -- learning activities are carried on throughout the community; students are allowed to choose their subjects, the time they would like them, and their teachers;
- learning centers -- learning resources are concentrated in one location available to the students in the community; this would include Magnet schools, educational parks, career-education centers, and vocational and technical high schools;
- continuation schools -- provide for students whose education has been interrupted; this would include dropout centers, re-entry programs, pregnancy-maternity centers, evening high schools, and street academies;
- multi-cultural schools -- emphasize cultural pluralism, ethnic and racial awareness, and usually serve a multi-cultural student body;
- free schools -- emphasize greater freedom for students and teachers by offering radical approaches to teaching and learning theories;
- schools-within-walls -- mini-schools or satellite schools which complement the existing school by offering materials, facilities, and activities that are not available at the main school;
- home-schooling -- movement of parents exercising their right to educate their children in their own homes; and
- religious education -- schools operated by churches or religious organizations (Meyers, 1988).

The alternative schools implemented by HISD fall under the categories of learning centers and continuation schools. The district's Magnet schools could also be classified as alternative schools under Meyers' definitions even though the district maintains them separately.

Conditions necessary for the success of alternative schools, as identified by Raywid (1988), are that they: 1) must be small enough to permit personalization of the school experience - no more than several hundred students with a low student-teacher ratio, 2) must be concerned with the full development of the child, not just academically, but personally and socially as well, and 3) must provide its teachers with enough freedom from standard rules and procedures to enable them to frame and carry out their own vision of schooling. Alternative schools must be freer of external controls than the traditional schools; this power should be shifted to the school and diffused among the classroom teachers (Raywid, 1988). Greater autonomy not only contributes to teacher success; it is also responsible for the heightened morale and sense of professionalism among teachers and for their unusual commitment and dedication (Raywid, 1988). Other factors which have been identified as necessary for the successful operation of alternative schools include:

- a clarity in both school philosophy and selection criteria for the students,
- a curriculum designed to improve the specific deficiencies of the students served while augmenting their abilities,
- students who are willingly enrolled in the alternative school - not forced to be there,
- a location large enough to provide adequate space but small enough to allow the feeling of cohesiveness,
- awareness by the board of education and the general public of the school's progress and programs,
- activities outside the confines of the school building and its traditional academic structure which give students the opportunity to earn credit for work programs, volunteer jobs, etc.,
- parent advisory groups, and
- the financial support to hire adequate staff and order sufficient supplies (Whalen, 1985).

Since potential dropouts are the target population of HISD's alternative schools, several studies attempting to evaluate the effects of alternative schools on dropouts were reviewed. Kagan (1988) (citing Durken, 1981; Massey & Crosby, 1982; Peng & Takai, 1983; Rumberger, 1981; Schreiber, 1979; Self, 1985) explains that "a variety of empirical research on high school dropouts has consistently indicated that, as a population, these students are characterized by low self-esteem, lack of family support, dislike for school, and a sense of low self-effectance." Kagan (1988) also states that "whether social learning theory, attribution theory, or motivation models are used to explain the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement, the assumption is that success or failure *per se* is less important than a student's perception of the causes of the success or failure." Although the results from Kagan's study found that the alternative high school students did not appear to have significantly lower self-esteem or more external locus of control than their

counterparts from the regular high school, the single most distinguishing and consistent characteristic of the alternative school students was lack of family support, cohesion, and perceived approval.

Alternative programs have been found to have a positive influence upon student affective growth. An example of this is Taylor's study (1986–87) of Project EASE.[3] According to the students, "Project EASE...did more for their self-images, outlook on life, and attitudes toward further education than their previously attended conventional schools." Taylor also found that, "empathetic teachers are particularly important for students who have suffered the impact of negative labels." Whalen (1985), who is the head teacher at an alternative high school in New York, contends that "well-designed and supported alternative high schools continue to serve students who would have dropped out of school."

[3] Project EASE was a federally funded program for resocializing high school students. It existed as a predominantly Black school in a mid-western metropolitan area. Its emphasis was on vocational training.

Results

Question 1 What programs were offered and what services were available to students at each of the alternative schools?

Method

Information concerning the programs offered and the services available to students at each campus were obtained from interviews with the principal or administrator of the school, school brochures, the proposals submitted to and approved by the Board of Education for each school, and site visits. Draft copies of the descriptions were distributed to the principal or administrator of each school for verification of the information.

Findings

Carter Career Center

H.P. Carter Career Center (Carter) was approved by the Board of Education as an alternative school in 1978. It was designed to encourage students who have dropped out of school or are at-risk of dropping out of school to graduate, to successfully complete the GED, or to successfully enter the work force. A strong emphasis was to be placed on a) occupational skills training and career awareness, b) career-related academic instruction, and c) intensive counseling and other support services for students. Emphasis was also to be placed on attracting uninvolved Hispanic youth.

Carter offers basic skills classes in English, math, science, and social studies. Vocational courses offered include Child Care, CVAE Food Production, CVAE General Construction, CVAE General Mechanical Repair, CVAE Business Office Clerical, CVAE Business Office Services, CVAE Coop, and Single Parent Coop. No special education, English as a Second Language (ESL), physical education, or advanced or elective courses are offered at Carter. The only extra-curricular activity for students is Student Council. Students may attend Carter all four years, but they must return to their home school to complete any courses not offered at Carter. The diploma they receive is from their home school.

Through Urban Affairs,[4] a child care center and medical clinic are available, free of charge, on Carter's campus to HISD students and their children who attend the 13 HISD middle and high schools in the Fourth and Fifth Ward areas. Transportation is provided for students, except those living in the southwest area of Houston. Transportation guidelines prohibit children under the age of four from riding on district school buses. Students bringing children under the age of four to the child care center on campus must arrange for alternative transportation.

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[4] Urban Affairs is a non-profit community partner of HISD.

Contemporary Learning Center

Contemporary Learning Center (CLC) was implemented in the Fall of 1973 to provide competency-based, continuous progress instruction for middle school and high school students who are behind in school or are over-age and want to complete their schooling at a faster pace. Because the curriculum is competency-based and continuous progress, students may take as many courses as they are able during the year. The minimum time required to complete a class is three weeks. After 18 weeks, the highest possible grade a students may receive is diminished, so as to encourage students to complete their work as soon as they are able. In order to complete a course, students must demonstrate mastery of the course objectives on a final exam. Students may graduate and receive diplomas at any time from CLC upon completing the academic requirements.

The following remedial courses are offered at CLC: English, Fundamentals of Math, Pre-algebra, Introductory Physical Science, and a reading lab. Regular education classes include English, math, science, social studies, Spanish, French, drama, physical education, art, and music. The high school vocational courses offered are CVAE Coop, Marketing Education Coop, Office Education Coop, Home Economics, Industrial Technology, Business Education, and Basic Vocational Education. The vocational program offered in the middle school is Life Management. No special education, ESL, or advanced courses are taught at CLC. There is no school athletics program. Students who wish to participate in athletics may return to their home school in the afternoon after classes are dismissed at CLC. There are, however, intramural teams, and other extra-curricular activities such as the Program Improvement Council, HAMUN (a United Nations history group), newspaper, yearbook, two social clubs, and music and vocational competitions. Transportation is provided because CLC is also classified as a Magnet school.

Foley's Academy

Foley's Academy (Foley's) was implemented during the Fall of 1987 in the basement of the downtown Foley's Department Store as a joint effort between HISD, Communities in Schools, and Foley's Department Stores. It was developed to serve those students who have displayed academic potential, but who for some reason are failing in their current program or have already dropped out of school. Foley's curriculum is competency-based continuous progress; students contract with the teachers for assignments and complete the course when they have met the objectives and demonstrated competency in the subject matter. The rate at which students complete courses is determined by their motivation and ability. Students may graduate and receive diplomas from Foley's upon completing the academic requirements.

Foley's was originally designed as a year-round program. After its second year, when the start-up grant expired, Foley's was scaled back to the regular 175 day school year. Foley's was also designed to include a mentorship program with members of the downtown business community, especially Foley's Department Store personnel, assisting in tutoring and making presentations to the students. With Foley's Department Stores under new management, this aspect of the school has not been developed. Foley's was also started as a Magnet school and remained

under the Magnet guidelines through 1989–90. As such, Foley's does not operate under the Magnet umbrella.

Foley's offers regular education classes in math, science, history, and English, all of which contain some advanced elements. It also offers college preparatory courses: Spanish, French, Italian, drama, art, and data processing. Interested students may take chemistry which is taught at the University of Houston-Downtown; seniors may receive dual credit. Health and physical education courses are taught, but the entire physical education curriculum is based on theory and concepts since there is no gymnasium. Extracurricular activities consist of plays presented on and off campus by the drama class. No vocational, ESL, or special education courses are offered. Transportation and meals are not provided to students attending this school.

Counseling and guidance services are available to the students at Foley's. A variety of volunteers provide counseling services on an as-needed basis. Every Friday, a group counseling session is held for the students.

Foley's has been used as a model school for ten corporate academies throughout the country. It received the Scholastic Gains Award for 1990 sponsored by the Governor's Excellence in Education program and was recognized as the school with the top test scores in growth for the TEAMS standardized test within HISD for 1989–90. In addition, Foley's has been recognized at state and regional At-Risk conferences for the work they are doing with at-risk students. It was a featured school at a seven state conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico in October 1989.

Harper Alternative School

Harper was approved as an alternative school in June 1985. This program was designed to serve moderately to severely emotionally disturbed adolescents. These youth are at high risk for institutionalization either in mental institutions, the juvenile justice system, or in closed residential settings. Harper also provides vocational education for handicapped/special education students ages 15 to 22. These students are special education students who may be unable to gain entry into other HISD vocational programs because of previous behavior, they need a small school setting, or they are at risk of dropping out of school. The goal is for students to return to their home schools or a less restrictive environment after they successfully complete the *management system* which is a behavior adjustment program implemented for the students at Harper. Students may attend Harper all four years, but diplomas are issued from their home school.

In addition, Harper has three regular education programs which serve middle school children: the Hogg suspension program (STARS), the Crisis program, and the Code IV program. The STARS program was designed to meet the needs of students who have been suspended from Hogg Middle School. The Crisis program was designed to serve students, grades seven through twelve, who are having severe adjustment problems in school. They are placed at Harper while the family and HISD explore possible options or care for the child. The Code IV program was designed to serve students, grades six through twelve, who have violated HISD's Code of

Conduct with regard to weapons. They are placed at Harper as an alternative to expulsion. For all three programs, the sending school provides the course work, maintains the attendance records, and administers the grades. Each of the programs serves regular education students. The students are kept in a separate class for each program with a maximum enrollment of fifteen. Students remain in the programs for six weeks. In the STARS program, Hogg Middle School also funds the teacher position.

All courses offered at Harper are special education courses with the exception of the STARS, Crisis, and Code IV programs. Additional courses offered to Harper's students include sign language, computers, and physical education. There is a one-hour enrichment period per week during which different topics are presented including art, crafts, drama, music, and driver's education. The vocational education programs offered at Harper are VEH General Mechanical Repair, VEH Building Maintenance, CVAE Child Care, VEH Food Production, VEH General Construction, VEH Horticulture, and VEH Coop. Harper also offers the Project Excel program sponsored by the Houston Job Training Partnership Council. Extra-curricular activities consist of Student Council, Boys Club, weight lifting, and vocational competitions. No ESL courses are offered. Transportation is provided for the special education students. Students attending the other programs must arrange for their own transportation.

Harris County Youth Village

The Harris County Youth Village (Youth Village) is a minimum security residential court placement facility for adjudicated youth ages 11 to 17. The facility is operated by the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department. The Board of Education approved the operation of a school by HISD personnel at the facility in April 1975. The program was implemented in the Fall of 1975. The Board approved the addition of a summer school session soon after the program was implemented for which the county provided funding.

Individualized instruction in math, English, science, history, and Chapter I reading is offered. There are two special education resource classes. A Behavior Adjustment class has recently been added. The vocational education classes include Industrial Technology, Business Education/Computers, CVAE Food Production/Home Economics, CVAE General Mechanical Repair, and CVAE General Construction. Physical education classes are taught as well.

The Youth Village received the 1990 award for Best Educational Facility for Juvenile Delinquents in the United States from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Houston Night High School

Houston Night High School (Night H.S.) was approved in October 1974 and opened in March 1975 to serve students whose personal goals, family problems, and work schedules do not allow them to attend the traditional day school, but who have a strong desire to complete the requirements for a high school diploma. It also serves day students who are authorized to take one or two courses at Night H.S., on a tuition basis, to supplement their day curriculum. Summer

school is also offered on a tuition basis for students throughout the county. Tuition is $50 per course. In addition, Night H.S. is a student teaching center where university students may participate in field teaching experiences which they are unable to do during the day.

Night H.S. offers both semesters of regular education classes to students each semester. This allows students to take whichever semester of a class they need. The regular education courses offered are in English, math, science, and social studies, along with health and physical education. Electives offered include child development, art, crafts, record keeping, personal business management, office procedures, home management, and typing. No special education courses are offered. There are no extracurricular activities, and transportation is not provided for the students attending Night H.S.

Kay On-Going Education

Kay On-Going Education (Kay) was implemented in May 1970 as an alternative school for pregnant students in HISD. The program was designed to allow them to continue their education in a safe, caring environment, to receive the best possible prenatal services, and to develop positive and responsible attitudes toward themselves and their babies.

Kay offers regular education classes in math, science, social studies, and English. There are also resource classes taught by one special education teacher. The vocational courses offered are Home Economics, Parenting and Child Development, CVAE Business Office Services, and Business Education/Office Support. Accounting, Record Keeping, and Computer Literacy are additional courses available to students. There are health and physical education classes designed for pregnant teens. Prenatal care and hospital registration services are available to the students. Breakfast and lunch are planned with the girls' nutritional needs in mind. Transportation is also provided. Extra-curricular activities for the girls include Student Council, field trips to local hospitals, and an annual Mother-Daughter Banquet.

Kay is also involved in the Education for Premature Parents project sponsored by the Child Abuse Prevention Network, the Baby Buddy program sponsored by the March of Dimes and coordinated by Neighborhood Centers, and the Project Excel program sponsored by the Houston Job Training Partnership Council. The girls are also introduced to the federally funded WIC (Women, Infants, Children) program which provides them with limited free food for themselves and their babies. Enron Corporation, Kay's business partner, provides funds for special school projects. Several sororities, churches, and other community organizations donate clothing, baby items, and other incentives for Kay students.

The girls attending Kay are allowed a two-week confinement period for recuperation after a normal delivery and three weeks after a Caesarean section during which they receive assignments from their teachers. Although students may enter Kay at any time during their pregnancy and leave any time after delivery, they are encouraged to remain at Kay until the end of the six-week grading period or semester after delivery. After this time, they are to return to their regular school. Any

exceptions are determined by the girl's situation with approval from the principals at Kay and the sending school.

Question 2 What were the referral or selection criteria for students attending each campus?

Method

The referral or selection criteria for students attending each campus were obtained from interviews with the principal or administrator of the school, school brochures, and the proposals submitted to and approved by the Board of Education.

Findings

Carter Career Center

Carter serves students who have dropped out or are classified as being at-risk of dropping out of school (see footnote 1, page 2). To attend Carter, students must live within HISD, provide a report card or copy of a transcript, immunization records, and a checkout sheet from their home school. Students must have completed the eighth grade and have taken a math, reading, and vocational aptitude test. An interview with the student, parent(s), and school administrator is also required.

Contemporary Learning Center

Students who apply to CLC must be enrolled in an HISD school or have dropped out of school. The school prefers to accept students who score no more than two years below grade level in reading and math on standardized tests. Students who score more than two grade levels below, if accepted, are placed on probationary status. Students must also be able to explain why they had poor attendance at their home school. Acceptance into the program is based on past academic performance, attendance and behavior history, achievement tests, and an interview with the student, parent(s), and school staff. Because CLC is a Magnet school, it is required by the Board of Education to maintain a 60% minority and 40% other enrollment ratio.[5] If the school is not at enrollment capacity, it may accept students from outside of the district who are not in the minority at that district according to the Voluntary Interdistrict Education Plan.

Foley's Academy

Students qualify for the program at Foley's by having average or above average achievement test scores and grade level reading skills. In addition, they must be at-risk of dropping out of school because of poor attendance or the inability to work within the traditional school structure, or have already dropped out of school and desire to return. Admission is based on a transcript and current test data as well as an interview with the student and parent(s). Students may be referred by principals, counselors, or treatment centers. Out of district students who were

[5] Under Magnet guidelines, "minority" is defined as Hispanic and Black ethnic groups while "other" includes all non-Hispanic and non-Black ethnic groups.

admitted into Foley's when it was a Magnet school have been allowed to stay. However, since Foley's is no longer a Magnet school, out of district students are not currently accepted.

Harper Alternative School

Students who are eligible to attend Harper must be emotionally disturbed (E.D.). For students to enter into the Vocational Education Program for the Handicapped, they must be admitted into the program by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) process and qualify for a special education label (L.D.). Most of the students score two or more grade levels below on standardized tests.

Students reassigned to Harper for the Code IV, Crisis, and STARS programs are admitted on a space available basis. Before a student is admitted into the STARS program, the parent(s) and student are required to meet with the STARS teacher and the administrator at Harper. The students are referred to the program by the principal at Hogg Middle School. Before admission into the Crisis program, the parent(s) and student are required to meet with the district psychologist, Crisis teacher, and the administrator at Harper. Students are referred to the Crisis program by the district psychologist. Students are referred to the Code IV program by their home school principal. Before a student is admitted into the Code IV program, a meeting must take place between the parent(s), student, social worker, Code IV teacher, and Harper administrator.

Harris County Youth Village

Every child housed at the Youth Village is enrolled in HISD's school at the facility. Children at the facility have been placed there by a judge for a period of three to six months. The children sentenced to the Youth Village have been convicted of various crimes including auto theft, burglary, breaking and entering, assault, prostitution, and drug dealing.

Houston Night High School

Students who live within HISD, are within 15 to 21 years of age, and are in the ninth through twelfth grade are eligible to attend Night H.S. at no charge if the student enrolls in four or more classes and is not attending a daytime school. Students attending school during the day may take up to two classes at Night H.S. on a tuition basis with authorization from the day school.

Kay On-Going

To enter Kay, students must reside in HISD, present a current immunization record and medical form verifying pregnancy, present a report card or checkout sheet from the current school, and participate in an interview. They cannot begin attending Kay until district transportation has been arranged.

Question 3 What was the capacity of each alternative school program and what was the enrollment during the 1990–91 school year?

Method

Program capacity figures were provided by the registrar or principal at each school. Enrollment and attendance data were obtained from the HISD Student Master File. To create a "snapshot" of the schools' enrollment, data for October 12, 1990, were utilized. The 1990-91 cumulative enrollment data included all students who enrolled at each of the schools at any time during the 1990–91 school year. The cumulative enrollment figures were used to calculate the students' average lengths of stay per school.

Findings

One characteristic of HISD's alternative schools is their high student mobility. This is evident when examining the enrollment data and students' average length of stay per school (see Table 1). This characteristic of alternative schools will be discussed in further detail in Research Question 4. On any given day, as depicted by the enrollment snapshot for October 12, 1990, each of the alternative schools was operating near capacity. However, Kay was operating at 32 students over capacity. It is evident that many students rotated in and out of each of the schools since the cumulative enrollment figures were larger than the program capacities and the average length of days students attended any one school was substantially lower than the 175 possible school days. This is especially true for CLC and Foley's which are continuous progress schools, Youth Village and Kay which serve students only while they are under court jurisdiction (Youth Village) or pregnant (Kay), and Night H.S. which accommodates many students who only need to pick up a few courses outside of their regular day school.

Table 1. Capacity, Enrollment, and Attendance Data per School

	Program Capacity	Oct. 12, 1990 Enrollment Snapshot	1990–91 Cumulative Enrollment	Average length of stay (days)
Carter	200	168	215	121
CLC M.S.	200	187	264	101
CLC H.S.	500	491	746	108
Foley's Academy	151	103	216	103
Harper	125	89	151	109
Harris County Youth Village	125	83	198	86
Houston Night H.S.	500	342	667	90
Kay On-Going	160	192	507	69
Total	1,961	1,655	2,964	98

One research question which could not be resolved in this analysis was "What changes have occurred in attendance patterns for students enrolled at the alternative schools?" The difficulty in answering the second question regarding changes in attendance is that attendance is recorded in the Student Master File data base by student and not by school. Since the students enrolled in the alternative schools are highly mobile, as discussed earlier, they may change schools several times during the year making it difficult to determine if any changes in attendance from 1990 to 1991 were attributable to the effect of enrollment at a specific alternative school.

Question 4 What was the mobility of the students who attended the alternative schools?

Method

Student mobility for this analysis was identified by four categories: 1) if the student entered a school at the beginning of the school year and stayed there throughout the year, with only minor breaks in attendance; 2) if the student entered a school at the beginning of the school year and exited the school before the end of the year; 3) if the student entered a school not at the beginning of the school year but stayed until the end of the year; and 4) if the student entered a school not at the beginning of the school year and exited the school before the end of the year. This analysis was conducted for each alternative school campus attended by HISD students. As a result, if a student entered Carter at the beginning of the year and then left and enrolled at Kay until the end of the year, that student would be counted at Carter as a "2" and at Kay as a "3." If on the other hand, a Harper student enrolled at the beginning of the year and stayed until the end of the year, but left for a short period of time during which he was enrolled at the Harris County Juvenile Detention Center, he would be counted at Harper as a "1."

Findings

As discussed in response to Research Question 3, HISD's alternative schools are characterized by highly mobile student populations. An analysis of this mobility is illustrated in Table 2. The largest percentage of students from CLC M.S. (39%) entered at the beginning of the year and exited before the end of the school year. Students leaving CLC M.S. may be enrolling in CLC H.S. once they are withdrawn from the middle school. The largest percentage of students who attended Carter (46%), CLC H.S. (28%), Foley's (37%), Harper (37%), Youth Village (36%), and Night H.S. (52%) entered at some time during the school year and stayed until the end of the year. Considering the student population it serves, it is not surprising that 47% of the student population at Kay entered during the school year and left before the end of the year. On the whole, only 12% of the students attending alternative schools entered a school at the beginning of the year and stayed at that school until the end of the year.

Table 2. Student Mobility Characteristics by School

	Stayed all year (%)	Entered at beginning and exited (%)	Entered during year and stayed (%)	Entered during year and exited (%)
Carter	14	8	46	32
CLC M.S.	11	39	18	32
CLC H.S.	26	23	28	24
Foley's Academy	17	16	37	31
Harper	23	17	37	24
Harris County Youth Village	6	35	36	22
Houston Night H.S.	6	13	52	29
Kay On-Going	<1	15	38	47

Question 5 What were the demographic characteristics of students who enrolled at each school?

Method

The gender, ethnicity, and age of all students who were enrolled at each of the alternative schools at any time during the 1990–91 school year were retrieved from the HISD Student Master File. (See Table 1 on page 15 for cumulative enrollment figures.) Age was determined as of September 1, 1990.

Findings

Table 3 indicates the percentage of students by gender and ethnicity who enrolled at each of the alternative schools during the 1990–91 school year. CLC M.S., Harper, and the Youth Village served a larger percentage of male students than the other schools. Except for Kay, the other schools appeared to have a fairly even distribution of male to female students.

Foley's and the Youth Village appeared to have ethnically diverse populations with Foley's having a slightly larger percentage of White students (45%) and the Youth Village having a slightly larger percentage of Black students (46%). Carter, CLC M.S., CLC H.S., Harper, and Kay served a larger percentage of Black students (67%, 80%, 83%, 58%, and 67% respectively) while Night H.S. served a larger percentage of Hispanic students (62%). These numbers compare to HISD's secondary student population ethnicity of 39% Black, 42% Hispanic, 16% White, and 3% Other.[6]

Table 3. Percentage of Students by Gender and Ethnicity by School

	Gender		Ethnicity			
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Asian (%)	Black (%)	Hispanic (%)	White (%)
Carter	42	58	—	67	33	<1
CLC M.S.	66	34	<1	80	16	4
CLC H.S.	50	50	<1	83	13	4
Foley's Academy	49	51	<1	33	22	45
Harper	83	17	—	58	27	15
Harris County Youth Village	80	20	1	46	30	24
Houston Night H.S.	49	51	1	32	62	4
Kay On-Going	—	100	<1	67	29	4

[6] *HISD District and School Profiles 1990–91.*

Table 4 depicts the wide range of ages of students enrolled at each of the alternative schools during the 1990–91 school year. The high schools, Carter, CLC, Foley's, Harper, and Night H.S., had students with seven to nine year age spans. CLC M.S. had a seven year age span from 11 to 17 years of age, the Youth Village had a six year age span from 12 to 17 years of age, and Kay had an 11 year age span with students from 11 through 22 years of age. The average age of students at each of the schools was: Carter - 17.0, CLC M.S. - 14.2, CLC H.S. - 16.8, Foley's - 16.7, Harper - 15.9, Youth Village - 14.4, Night H.S. - 17.7, and Kay - 15.9.

Table 4. Percentage of Students by Age by School

	Age of Students											
	11 (%)	12 (%)	13 (%)	14 (%)	15 (%)	16 (%)	17 (%)	18 (%)	19 (%)	20 (%)	21 (%)	22 (%)
Carter	—	—	—	1	9	25	35	19	9	2	—	—
CLC M.S.	1	6	17	31	36	8	1	—	—	—	—	—
CLC H.S.	—	—	<1	4	16	21	27	20	8	3	—	—
Foley's Academy	—	—	—	3	15	28	26	18	7	2	—	—
Harper	—	1	6	18	18	22	17	11	6	—	2	—
Harris County Youth Village	—	3	21	29	33	14	1	—	—	—	—	—
Houston Night H.S.	—	—	—	1	4	14	28	26	18	9	—	<1
Kay On-Going	<1	1	4	10	21	27	25	8	3	1	—	<1

Question 6 What were the academic characteristics of students who enrolled at each school?

Method

Metropolitan Achievement Test, 6th Edition (MAT6) NCE[7] scores were obtained from the HISD Student Master File for students whose last known school as of May 1991 was one of the alternative schools. For all students, three MAT6 test scores were used for this analysis. The reading scores are the total reading composite score derived from the vocabulary and reading comprehension subtests. The math scores are for the total math composite score derived from the three math subtests: math concepts, math computations, and math problem solving. The complete battery score is a composite score derived from all the subtests in reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, and research skills.

Findings

Figure 1 profiles the 1991 results from the MAT6 standardized test which is administered to first through ninth grade students during April of each year. The MAT6 is also administered to 10th through 12th grade students if they are of limited English proficiency (LEP). Since students accepted into Harper are special education students, they are not required to take the MAT6 test. The analysis below is limited to the number of students who actually took the standardized test. Of the 2,964 students who enrolled in alternative schools during 1990–91, 458 had complete MAT6 results; 448 were ninth grade students and 10 were 10th through 12th grade students. The following percentage of students took the MAT6 test from each of the schools: Carter - 10%, CLC M.S. - 34%, CLC H.S. - 20%, Foley's - 14%, Youth Village - 33%, Night H.S. - 2%, and Kay 18%.

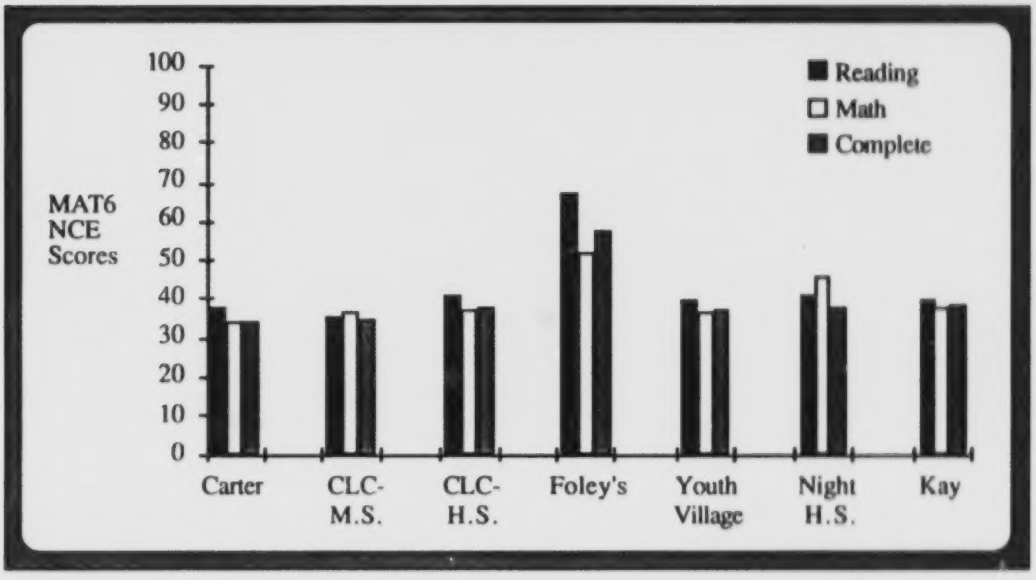
It must be remembered that students are accepted into each of the alternative schools based on different selection and referral criteria. Consequently, the results illustrated in Figure 1 should not be compared across schools, but used to profile the academic characteristics of the students attending the schools as measured by the MAT6 standardized test. For example, the students attending Foley's should be expected to have higher average test scores than the other alternative schools because one of the criteria for selection into Foley's is that students must have average or above average standardized test scores. This is not a requirement for the other alternative schools.

The NCE scores depicted in Figure 1 evidence that the Foley's students scored in the 50th and 60th percentiles, scoring markedly better on the total reading subtest. The students at the other alternative schools scored in the 30th and 40th percentiles. The Night H.S. students scored higher

[7] The NCE ("normal curve equivalent") scale is a normalized scale used in the evaluation of educational programs. The NCE scale has a mean of 50 and standard deviation of 21; the NCE unit is 1/98 of the distance between the 1st and 99th percentiles, expressed in z-score units (Glass & Hopkins, 1984).

on total math than on total reading or the complete battery. The students at Carter, CLC H.S., Youth Village, and Kay scored higher on total reading than on total math or the complete battery.

Figure 1. Average 1991 MAT6 NCE Scores by School



Another research question which could not be resolved in this analysis was "What changes have occurred in MAT6 test scores for students who were enrolled at the school?" To answer this question, it was determined that the analysis would need to be conducted on students who were identified as having attended one of the alternative schools from the beginning of the year until the end of the year (see Table 2, page 18) to maximize the "treatment" effect of the school. This narrowed the sample size down from 2,964 to 353 students. Next, the 1990 MAT6 test scores were compared to 1991 MAT6 scores for these students. Only 84 students had both sets of test scores and only two schools accounted for more than 10 students. It was concluded that any meaningful analysis on the effect of the alternative schools on students' MAT6 scores could not be based on the results of 84 students from only two of the eight alternative schools (CLC M.S. and CLC H.S. were counted separately here). Further, the MAT6 test is generally administered only through the ninth grade; therefore, no scores were available for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students unless they were of limited English proficiency (LEP).

Question 7 What were the dropout and graduation rates for each alternative school?

Method

The dropout rate for each alternative school was obtained from HISD's Department of Research and Evaluation, *Dropout Report for 1989–90*, released in February 1991. These calculations were made based on the cumulative enrollment method described in the *Dropout Report*. The cumulative enrollment method causes the dropout rate to be somewhat lower but presumably more accurate than that reported by the Texas Education Agency which utilizes the Fall Survey figures as the enrollment base. The number of students graduating during 1990–91 was provided by the registrar or principal at each campus.

Findings

Table 5 identifies the 1987–88, 1988–89, and 1989–90 dropout rate for each of the alternative schools. The dropout rate is calculated in October of each year for the preceding school year. Consequently, the 1990–91 dropout rate was unavailable at the time of this report. The dropout rate for all of the alternative schools declined from 1987–88 to 1988–89 at an average of 23%. The dropout rate for four of the schools continued to decline from 1988–89 to 1989–90 at an average of 7% while the dropout rate for the other four schools increased by an average of 6%. Decreases in the dropout rate must be attributed not only to the district's efforts to prevent students from dropping out, but also to continued improvements in student accounting procedures. When looking at these dropout rates, it should also be remembered that all the students attending the alternative schools have been identified as being at-risk of dropping out of school.

Table 5. Dropout Rate Over Time by Alternative School

	1987-88 (%)	1988-89 (%)	1989-90 (%)
Carter	53	35	42
CLC M.S.	20	15	10
CLC H.S.	36	23	26
Foley's Academy	41	8	20
Harper	34	24	19
Harris County Youth Village	42	33	25
Houston Night H.S.	88	10	13
Kay On-Going	52	34	24

Although the dropout rates for these schools appear to be fairly high, what is more interesting is how many dropouts the alternative schools are reclaiming. Table 6 shows those students who dropped out of school during the 1989–90 school year and enrolled in an alternative

school during 1990–91. Thirty of the students enrolled in alternative schools had been dropouts; 47% of them were reclaimed by Night H.S. In fact, a recent survey of Night H.S. students conducted by the HISD Research and Evaluation Department indicated that 45 of the 275 students responding had dropped out of school before enrolling in Night H.S. CLC, Harper, Youth Village, and Kay also assisted in reclaiming 1989–90 dropouts. This analysis does not include students who may have dropped out of school two or more years ago and have since attended alternative schools.

Table 6. School Attended in 1990–91 by 1989–90 Dropouts

School attended in 1990–91	1989-90 Dropouts
Carter	—
CLC M.S.	1
CLC H.S.	5
Foley's Academy	—
Harper	4
Harris County Youth Village	1
Houston Night H.S.	14
Kay On-Going	5
Total	30

It has been said many times that "any student who graduates from an alternative school is a success story for the odds are that he/she would not have graduated from a traditional school." With this in mind, Table 7 illustrates the number of students who graduated from each of the alternative schools during the 1990–91 school year as a percentage of students identified as seniors at each of the campuses. Because several of the schools are continuous progress schools, the students identified as seniors who have not graduated may be completing their course work in the Fall of 1991.

Table 7. Graduates From the Alternative Schools

	Number of Graduates	As a Percentage of Seniors
Carter	6	21
CLC	73	61
Foley's Academy	3	20
Harper	15	83
Harris County Youth Village	NA	NA
Houston Night H.S.	3	7*
Kay On-Going	NA	NA

* Based on full-time students.

Question 8 What staff was used to operate each school, and what were the training and experience levels of the teachers at each school?

Method

Information concerning the staffing of the alternative schools was obtained from interviews with the principal or administrator of each school. During March and the beginning of April 1991, formal interviews were conducted with the teachers at each of the alternative schools. (See Appendix A for the interview instrument.) The interviews were conducted at the schools in areas set aside for privacy. Each teacher was interviewed separately according to schedules provided by the schools. There was 100% participation of the teachers who were present at each school on the days the interviews were conducted. However, some of the teachers were absent on the interview days. The following is the number of teachers interviewed at each school and the percentage of total teachers: Carter - 10 (83%), CLC - 32 (89%), Foley's - 13 (100%), Harper - 26 (100%), Youth Village - 15 (100%), Night H.S. - 7 (100%), and Kay - 13 (81%). The interview responses were tabulated and are presented below.

Findings

The staff used to operate each of the alternative schools during the 1990–91 school year is listed below. From the following staffing descriptions, it is evident that although all of these schools are alternative schools serving special populations of students who have very special problems and needs, the resources available were not consistent across the alternative schools and at times were not adequate. For example, it appears that Carter lacked sufficient office staff to maintain the students' records and paperwork as well as support personnel such as psychologists, social workers, or counselors who were able to devote their time to the students and not have to act as registrars as well. Some of the other schools also lacked sufficient counseling and support services for these students causing the administrators and teachers to act as counselors which subtracted from the time they could devote to the tasks required of them.

Carter Career Center

Carter was staffed this year by a principal, 12 regular education teachers, two counselors/registrars, secretary, office clerk, Substance Abuse Monitor, and 1.5 security officers.

Contemporary Learning Center

CLC operated this year with a principal, middle school assistant principal, high school assistant principal, dean of instruction, Magnet coordinator, nurse, librarian, registrar, office staff, security officer, one middle school and three high school academic counselors, one high school and one middle school teacher's aide, and 27 high school and nine middle school teachers.

Foley's Academy

Foley's operated this year with a director, 13 regular education teachers, academic counselor/registrar, attendance clerk, secretary, and a part-time nurse. Communities in Schools provided a project manager and an intern for student counseling. The Texas Employment Commission provided one person once a week for job placement for the students. Additional counselors provided time to students on a voluntary basis.

Harper Alternative School

Harper was staffed this year with an executive director, dean of instruction, 26 special education teachers, 17 teacher aides, vocational counselor, four psychological associates, psychologist two days a week, social worker, four part time case workers at night, Project Excel coordinator, registrar, nurse, attendance clerk, secretary, and three security monitors.

Harris County Youth Village

The educational program at the Youth Village was operated this year by a principal, 13 regular education and two special education teachers, Student Referral Center counselor, and a school counselor. Harris County provided a psychologist, social workers, nurse, security monitor, and other staff.

Houston Night High School

Night H.S. was staffed by a principal, 7 regular education teachers, academic counselor, librarian, 5 part-time teachers, a part-time nurse, and a security guard.

Kay On-Going Education

Kay was operated this year by a principal, 15 regular education and 1 special education teacher, teacher's aide, counselor, nurse, librarian, and 3 office staff. There was a social worker three times a week, and a doctor and 2 nurses two times a week from the Baylor College of Medicine. Neighborhood Centers provided a case manager to work with the students.

The following tables describe the experience and training of the faculty at each school. The number of years that the teachers interviewed had been employed at each of the alternative schools is summarized in Table 8. It is interesting to note that with Carter and the Youth Village which have been operating for more than ten years, the largest percentage of teachers responding had been teaching at each school for one to three years. Kay has been operating for more than twenty years while the largest percentage of teachers have been employed there for four to six years.

Table 8. Percent of Teachers by Years Employed at the Alternative School

	Years Employed at the Alternative School				
	< 1 (%)	1-3 (%)	4-6 (%)	7-9 (%)	10+ (%)
Carter	10	40	30	20	—
CLC	—	22	16	25	38
Foley's Academy	8	54	38	—	—
Harper	4	50	46	—	—
Harris County Youth Village	—	33	27	13	27
Houston Night H.S.	14	—	29	14	43
Kay On-Going	—	23	46	8	23

The number of years alternative school teachers had been employed by HISD are summarized in Table 9. Over 50% of the teachers responding at CLC, Harper, Youth Village, Night H.S., and Kay had been employed by the district for ten years or more. This compares to the district-wide average length of employment for teachers which was 9.6 years. The district-wide percentage of teachers who had been employed by the district was 22% for 0 to 3 years, 27% for 4 to 10 years, and 50% for eleven or more years.[8]

Table 9. Percent of Teachers by Years Employed by HISD

	Years Employed by HISD				
	< 1 (%)	1-3 (%)	4-6 (%)	7-9 (%)	10+ (%)
Carter	10	20	30	30	10
CLC	—	6	16	16	63
Foley's Academy	—	23	23	8	46
Harper	—	8	8	19	65
Harris County Youth Village	—	7	33	7	53
Houston Night H.S.	—	14	14	—	71
Kay On-Going	—	—	23	15	62

Table 10 indicates the percentage of teachers at each of the alternative schools who had taught at other HISD schools. For all of the schools, over 50% of the teachers responding had experience teaching at other district schools.

[8] *HISD District and School Profiles 1990–91.*

Table 10. Percent of Teachers Who Had Taught at Other HISD Schools

School	%
Carter	50
CLC	50
Foley's Academy	62
Harper	96
Harris County Youth Village	67
Houston Night H.S.	57
Kay On-Going	85

Table 11 depicts that all of the teachers interviewed at CLC, Foley's, Youth Village, and Night H.S. had obtained a bachelor's degree. Carter, Harper, and Kay each had at least one teacher who had not yet received a bachelor's degree. Over 50% of the teachers at CLC, Harper, Youth Village, Night H.S., and Kay had obtained advanced degrees. Night H.S., Kay, and the Youth Village had the largest percentage of teachers who had earned graduate hours or received a master's degree (85%, 75%, and 73% respectively). One teacher at both CLC and Kay had earned their doctorate. In comparison, only 38% of the teachers employed by HISD have received a master's degree and less than 1% have a doctorate.[9]

Table 11. Percent of Teachers by Degree Earned

	Degree Earned							
	None (%)	Undergrad Hours(%)	Assoc. (%)	B.A. (%)	B.S. (%)	Graduate Hours(%)	Masters (%)	Doctorate (%)
Carter	10	10	—	—	80	40	20	—
CLC	—	—	—	47	51	6	56	3
Foley's Academy	—	—	—	46	54	—	46	—
Harper	8	—	—	35	58	4	54	—
Harris County Youth Village	—	—	—	27	73	20	53	—
Houston Night H.S.	—	—	—	43	57	14	71	—
Kay On-Going	—	—	8	31	62	23	54	8

9 *HISD District and School Profiles 1990–91.*

Question 9 In what ways did administrators and teachers perceive that the program was benefiting students?

Method

Teachers' and administrators' perceptions of ways in which the alternative schools benefitted the students were collected through interviews with the principal or administrator and the teachers of each school. Question 9 of the formal interview instrument described on page 25 asked teachers to indicate how attending the alternative school benefitted the students who attend. The responses to this question were coded and grouped according to similarities.

Findings

The perceived benefits to students attending alternative schools which were mentioned by the administrators and teachers at more than half of the schools were that alternative schools:

1. provide individualized academic instruction,
2. build students' self-esteem,
3. allow for individual attention to students' problems/ flexibility for staff to handle situations,
4. are staffed by caring and attentive professionals,
5. have smaller classes which allow for one-on-one attention,
6. keep students in school who would have dropped out/these students would not be in school had it not been for the alternative school,
7. provide access to good vocational programs,
8. fit the needs of students who cannot function in a traditional school setting,
9. help students become more responsible for themselves/learn to work independently,
10. improve students' attitude toward school and teachers,
11. provide students the opportunity to develop social skills and learn how to interact with others, and
12. provide at-risk students the opportunity to experience successes.

Since each of the schools has a different focus and targets a different at-risk student population, the perceived benefits which were mentioned by at least 25% of the respondents at each school are listed below. The number of respondents who gave each answer is identified beside it. (See Appendix B for a complete list of the responses.)

<u>Carter Career Center</u>

- smaller classes allow for one-on-one attention - 8
- individual attention to students' problems/ flexibility for staff to handle situations - 6
- access to good vocational programs - 5
- individualized academic instruction - 5
- caring and attentive staff - 4
- remedial courses offer students the opportunity to catch up - 3
- access to day care facility/clinic - 2
- tutorial enrichment programs - 2

Contemporary Learning Center

- individualized academic instruction/competency-based, continuous progress - 24
- students and teachers work closely together/one-on-one attention - 12
- individual attention to students' problems/flexibility for staff to handle situations - 11
- caring and attentive staff; surrogate family - 8
- students would not be in school or finish school had it not been for CLC - 8

Foley's Academy

- individual attention to students' problems/flexibility for staff to handle situations - 9
- individualized academic instruction/competency based-continuous progress instruction - 8
- builds students' self-esteem - 6
- fits needs of students who cannot function in a traditional school setting - 5
- smaller classes allow for one-on-one attention - 4
- caring and committed staff - 3

Harper Alternative School

- students would not be in school had it not been for Harper - 13
- smaller classes allow for one-on-one attention - 11
- fits needs of E.D. students who cannot function in a traditional school - 9
- access to counseling and social services - 8
- individualized academic instruction - 6
- improves students' conduct through use of the management system - 6

Harris County Youth Village

- students are given a structured, stable, and safe environment, unlike their home life - 10
- opportunity to develop social skills and learn how to interact with others - 9
- mandatory education - 7
- smaller classes allow for one-on-one attention - 6
- builds students' self-esteem - 5
- county keeps them fed and clothed so they are able to pay attention in school and learn - 5
- care and attention from staff, emotional support - 4
- opportunity to experience successes - 4

Houston Night High School

- Night H.S. is the only alternative available for some students because of daytime obligations, e.g., work, child care - 6
- individualized academic instruction - 4
- opportunity for older students to get a diploma - 3
- opportunity to catch up and finish on time - 2
- students would have dropped out of school had it not been for Night H.S./decreased dropout rate - 2

Kay On-Going

- smaller classes allow for one-on-one attention - 10
- students' grades improve, they become more serious about school - 7
- caring and attentive faculty/surrogate family - 6
- individualized academic instruction - 6

- students can see they are not alone in their situation - 6
- keeps girls from dropping out while pregnant/opportunity to continue education - 6
- convenient medical services/clinic - 5
- access to counselors and social workers to help students cope with their situation - 5
- safer environment than at home schools/fewer stairs/slower pace - 4
- not ostracized for being pregnant - 4
- fewer distractions than at home school - 4
- improves students' attitude toward school and teachers - 3
- WIC program (federal program provides milk and other supplies) - 3

Question 10 What recommendations did the administrators and teachers make to better serve the students?

Method

Teachers' and administrators' recommendations on how the alternative schools could better serve the students were collected through interviews with the principal or administrator and the teachers of each school. Question 10 of the formal interview instrument described on page 25 asked teachers to make recommendations to better serve the students who attend. The responses to this question were coded and grouped according to similarities.

Findings

The recommendations as to how the alternative schools could better serve the students which were mentioned by the administrators and teachers at more than half of the alternative schools were:

1. more training for staff on behavior management and at-risk students,
2. more extra-curricular activities including field trips and speakers,
3. more psychological counseling and support services for students,
4. alternative schools should not be held to same rules and guidelines as traditional schools, especially for enrollment guidelines and teacher:pupil ratios,
5. hazard pay for teachers,
6. more alternative schools,
7. more funding in general,
8. more public recognition and understanding of alternative schools,
9. more teachers/smaller class size because students could not function in traditional setting to begin with, and
10. more incentives for attendance/improve attendance.

As each of the schools serves a different at-risk student population which have special needs, recommendations which were mentioned by at least 25% of the respondents at each school are listed below. The number of respondents who gave each answer is identified beside it. (See Appendix C for a complete list of the responses.)

<u>Carter Career Center</u>

- more psychological counseling and support services for students - 7
- more teachers/smaller class size because students could not function in traditional setting to begin with - 6
- need library on campus - 3
- need reading teacher or specialist - 2
- more alternative schools - 2
- more vocational programs - 2
- girls should be allowed to bring their babies on the school bus when they are bringing them to the day care facility on campus - 2
- allow students to graduate from Carter - 2

Contemporary Learning Center

- need more teachers/too many students per class for self-paced program - 18
- more counselors/support personnel for students - 10

Foley's Academy

- more space - 6
- more funding in general - 4
- more funding for instructional materials including tapes for foreign language courses - 4
- more public recognition and understanding of alternative schools and of Foley's - 3
- more psychological counseling for students - 3

Harper Alternative School

- make facility more attractive and up-to-date - 9

Harris County Youth Village

- increase length of time students are at the Youth Village - 5
- more extra-curricular activities including speakers and field trips - 4

Houston Night High School

- four day schedule because Friday night attendance is poor - 2
- clarify and enforce attendance policy - 2
- child care for student parents would increase attendance - 2
- develop reading classes for all students - 2
- should not be held to guidelines for traditional schools/need campus-based management because these students have special needs - 2

Kay On-Going

- more classroom space, teachers are sharing rooms - 13
- offer child care provisions or facility because girls are dropping out after delivery - 8
- need homebound teacher for girls during confinement - 6
- need follow up on students once they leave Kay - 5
- need policy on how many students can enter or exit during a particular time period/specific entry and exit times - 5
- relocate facility away from chemical environment - 3
- more teachers because of wide range of skill areas needing to be taught/too many lesson preparations - 3
- stricter policy on excused absences - 3

Summary and Discussion

The seven alternative schools developed by HISD provide education to the growing population of at-risk students in an effort to reduce their dropout rate. Each of the schools serves a different population of students who do not function in the traditional school setting. The purpose of this report was to describe the programs offered at the alternative schools and to assess their effectiveness.

Findings

The capacity of the alternative schools was 1,961 students. Most of these spaces were for high school students. Harper, Youth Village, and Kay have limited middle school components while CLC has the only alternative middle school. The cumulative number of students who enrolled in alternative schools during 1990–91 was 2,964. Only 12% of the students attended one school all year. The average length of stay was 98 days which is a little over one semester. Each of the schools served populations of different gender and ethnic ratios. CLC M.S., Harper, and the Youth Village served a larger percentage of male students while Kay served only female students. There was a wide range of ages of students enrolled at each of the schools, from 11 to 22 years of age. The average age of students was also somewhat older than would be expected at traditional schools.

Although a limited number of test scores were available and compared in this report, examining test scores is not the best measure for assessing the effectiveness of the alternative schools. One of the primary goals of the schools is to keep students who are at-risk of dropping out of school from doing just that. An important finding was that 30 HISD students who had dropped out or had been expelled from school during the 1989–90 school year enrolled in alternative schools for the 1990–91 year. In addition, 100 students graduated from the alternative schools this year. It is possible that none of these students would have graduated from the traditional schools.

Another measure of effectiveness was the benefits to the students of attending an alternative school as perceived by the administrators and teachers of the schools. Many believed that, in these smaller settings, they were able to better address the specific needs of these students which go beyond the classroom such as abusive or neglectful home situations or the demands of single parent students with children. It is not easy to keep a young adult interested in school when their physical and mental needs are great and unmet. The teachers and administrators responded that they were able to provide flexibility and more one-on-one attention to these students, not only in their academics, but in other aspects of their life as well. Many maintained that, without these alternative schools, these students would be on the streets. The alternative schools also provide at-risk students access to good vocational programs that teach them job related skills and provide an opportunity to experience academic success, sometimes for the first time in a student's life.

Future evaluations or studies on the alternative schools should take into account the difficulty in obtaining and comparing standardized test scores and attendance data for students enrolled there. Discussions on the effectiveness of these schools will have to address different variables including possibly a more extensive analysis on the dropout behavior of these students and changes in attitudes toward school.

Extent to Which HISD's Alternative Schools Adhere to HISD and TEA Proposed Alternative School Guidelines — Recommendations

There does not appear to be any formal HISD guidelines or administrative structure under which alternative schools operate. It may be argued that alternative schools need more flexibility in guidelines in order to handle situations that develop with students who cannot function under traditional school guidelines. However, without guidelines specifically designed for them, alternative schools will be and are being held to the only guidelines that exist, and those are for the traditional schools. Students who are in the alternative schools are there because they, for whatever reason--emotionally disturbed, pregnant, personal problems, work and/or child care commitments, over-age, etc.--cannot or are not functioning in a traditional school setting. There are obvious problems associated with enrolling these students in an "alternative school" that is operated in a traditional fashion.

Both the TEA and the Bureau of Alternative Schools and Programs for HISD have created draft guidelines for alternative schools for at-risk students. However, because the alternative schools are administered by the individual district superintendents of their administrative district, there is no single administrative entity which makes decisions or provides support for all the alternative schools on a consistent basis. Several of the alternative schools were under-staffed and therefore, unable to meet the individual needs of the students enrolled there. Some of the schools, specifically CLC, require more teachers to achieve a lower pupil to teacher ratio than that of the traditional schools. A lower pupil to teacher ratio appears to be an essential element of the alternative schools in order to address the individual academic and personal needs of these at-risk students (TEA; Raywid, 1988). Other schools, specifically Carter, need more support personnel such as counselors, psychologists, and social workers to attend to the students' non-academic needs.

Other recommendations made by the teachers and administrators at the alternative schools are also stressed in the literature. These include adequate space for the programs offered, awareness by the Board of Education, the rest of the district, and the general public of the schools' existence and benefits to students, and adequate financial support to hire staff and order supplies appropriate to fit the special learning needs of the at-risk students who are served by the schools (Whalen, 1985).

HISD's alternative schools exist as separate entities and each has a unique mission. This evaluation identified many of the characteristics of the schools and their students. Although it is

not possible to investigate the impact of these schools on student achievement, other measures of success are evidenced in this report.

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Alternative Schools Teacher Interview

Instructions: Please answer the following questions. Information from this interview is intended to profile the teachers of HISD's Alternative Schools. It will not be used to assess program staff.

School _____ Date _____

1. What positions have you held at this school?

2. How many years have you held this/these position(s) at this school?

3. For what other schools have you worked in HISD? Other than HISD?

4. What positions did you hold at these schools?

5. How long have you worked for HISD? Other than HISD?

6. What Texas teaching certificates or endorsements do you currently hold?

7. What is your educationai background?
   B.A./B.S. _____
   M.A./M.S./M.Ed. _____
   Ph.D./Ed.D. _____

8. What training or experience do you have relating to children with special needs?

9. How is attendance at this school benefiting the students who attend? How is it affecting their conduct, attendance, attitude toward school, attitude toward themselves and others, academic achievement?

10. What recommendations would you make to better serve the students who attend this school?

APPENDIX B

Complete answers to Survey Question 9

"How is attendance at this school benefitting the students who attend?"

Carter Career Center

- smaller classes allow for one-on-one attention - 8
- individual attention to students' problems/ flexibility for staff to handle situations - 6
- access to good vocational programs - 5
- individualized academic instruction - 5
- caring and attentive staff - 4
- remedial courses offer students the opportunity to catch up - 3
- access to day care facility/clinic - 2
- tutorial enrichment programs - 2
- opportunity to develop social skills and learn how to interact with others - 1
- open communication with teachers, but discipline - 1
- pregnant girls are not ostracized - 1
- teachers are good role models for the students - 1
- builds students' self-esteem - 1
- hands on experiences in lab classes - 1
- allows girls who have kids or are pregnant the opportunity to continue their education - 1
- allows them to experience academic success - 1
- improves students' conduct - 1

Contemporary Learning Center

- individualized academic instruction/competency-based, continuous progress - 24
- students and teachers work closely together/one-on-one attention - 12
- individual attention to students' problems/flexibility for staff to handle situations - 11
- caring and attentive staff; surrogate family - 8
- students would not be in school or finish school had it not been for CLC - 8
- fits needs of over-age students or students who cannot function in a traditional school - 7
- learn to take responsibility for own work/learn to work independently - 7
- gets students out of their home neighborhoods/relieves peer pressure - 6
- opportunity to catch up or finish on time - 5
- builds students' self-esteem - 5
- opportunity to develop social skills and learn how to interact with others - 4
- opportunity to experience successes - 3
- allows students to be individuals - 3
- smaller school allows students to be active in things that they would not have been in, e.g., lead roles in plays - 2
- access to vocational programs - 2
- students can be sent back to home school if they do not follow the guidelines - 1
- modes of testing are flexible based on needs of students - 1
- students' learn to cope with outside pressures - 1
- St. Thomas mentorship program - 1
- improves students' conduct - 1
- staff refer students to social service agencies - 1
- teachers are good role models for students - 1
- St. Joseph program which combines business with academics - 1
- improves students' attitude toward school - 1

- motivates students to do well - 1
- tends to improve student attendance - 1

Foley's Academy

- individual attention to students' problems/flexibility for staff to handle situations - 9
- individualized academic instruction/competency based-continuous progress instruction - 8
- builds students' self-esteem - 6
- fits needs of students who cannot function in a traditional school setting - 5
- smaller classes allow for one-on-one attention - 4
- caring and committed staff - 3
- Foley's allows students to be individuals - 2
- encourages students to take responsibility for themselves - 2
- students would have dropped out had it not been for Foley's/decreased drop-out rate - 2
- students improve academically - 2
- emphasis on parental interaction with school and students - 2
- good for students who are motivated - 1
- curriculum is geared up not down - 1
- improves students' attitude toward school - 1
- students can be sent back to home school if they do not follow the guidelines - 1

Harper Alternative School

- students would not be in school had it not been for Harper - 13
- smaller classes allow for one-on-one attention - 11
- fits needs of E.D. students who cannot function in a traditional school - 9
- access to counseling and social services - 8
- individualized academic instruction - 6
- improves students' conduct through use of management system - 6
- caring and attentive staff; surrogate family - 5
- individual attention to students' problems/flexibility for staff to handle situations - 4
- program is run well/good-accessible administrator - 4
- access to good vocational programs - 4
- staff is experienced in handling students with E.D. label - 4
- opportunity to experience successes - 3
- builds students' self-esteem - 2
- opportunity to develop social skills and learn how to interact with others - 2
- work with parents/educate parents as well - 2
- students improve academically - 2
- enrichment programs on Fridays - 2
- door-to-door bus service - 1
- ROPES program - 1
- opportunity to buy into system - 1
- Project Excel - 1
- opportunity to remediate and enrich basic skills - 1
- keeps students out of institutional residential facilities - 1

Harris County Youth Village

- students are given a structured, stable, and safe environment-unlike their home life - 10
- opportunity to develop social skills and learn how to interact with others - 9
- mandatory education - 7
- smaller classes allow for one-on-one attention - 6
- builds students' self-esteem - 5
- county keeps them fed and clothed so they are able to pay attention in school and learn - 5
- care and attention from staff, emotional support - 4
- opportunity to experience successes - 4
- individualized academic instruction - 3
- access to good vocational programs - 3
- good principal who is developing consistency, even handed - 3
- Youth Village teaches the students responsibility - 3
- opportunity to change value system - 3
- Students receive incentives to do well, e.g., PMR money, home visits - 3
- second chance to straighten up - 2
- individual attention to students' problems/flexibility for staff to handle situation - 2
- students develop good study habits here - 1
- hope for the future - 1
- offers students the basics they need to complete their education - 1
- improves students' attitude toward school - 1
- benefits of team teaching - 1
- can receive credits toward a diploma -1
- access to county counselors who provide therapy - 1
- teachers are good role models for the students - 1

Houston Night High School

- H.N.H.S. is the only alternative available for some students because of daytime obligations, e.g., work, child care - 6
- individualized academic instruction - 4
- opportunity for older students to get diploma - 3
- opportunity to catch up and finish on time - 2
- students would have dropped out of school had it not been for H.N.H.S./decreased dropout rate - 2
- smaller class size - 1
- small school allows for peer tutoring - 1
- fewer distractions because no extracurricular activities, can focus entirely on academics - 1
- A and B sections are taught both semesters - 1
- teachers use meta-cognative thinking method - 1
- concentrated effort on needed skills - 1
- students can come to H.N.H.S. if they have academic or attendance problems at day school - 1
- allows students to get a diploma and not a GED - 1
- H.N.H.S. has positive influence on premature families - 1

Kay On-Going

- smaller classes allow for one-on-one attention - 10
- students' grades improve, they become more serious about school - 7
- caring and attentive faculty/surrogate family - 6
- individualized academic instruction - 6

- not alone in their situation - 6
- keeps them from dropping out while pregnant/opportunity to continue education - 6
- convenient medical services/clinic - 5
- access to counselors and social workers to help students cope with their situation - 5
- safer environment than at home schools/fewer stairs/slower pace - 4
- not ostracized for being pregnant - 4
- fewer distractions than at home school - 4
- improves students' attitude toward school and teachers - 3
- WIC program (federal program provides milk and other supplies) - 3
- individual attention to students' problems/flexibility for staff to handle situations - 2
- medical absences are excused - 2
- builds self esteem - 2
- helps them become more responsible - 2
- door-to-door bus service - 2
- graduates come back and give pep talks during career day - 1
- flexibility in making up work - 1
- short lunch lines - 1
- advanced health classes - 1
- there is a student council and some activities - 1
- positive impact on the majority of the students - 1

APPENDIX C

Complete answers to Survey Question 10
"What recommendations would you make to better serve the students
who attend this school?"

Carter Career Center

- more psychological counseling and support services for students - 7
- more teachers/smaller class size because students could not function in traditional setting to begin with - 6
- need library on campus - 3
- need reading teacher or specialist - 2
- more alternative schools - 2
- more vocational programs - 2
- girls should be allowed to bring their babies on the school bus when they are bringing them to the day care facility on campus - 2
- allow students to graduate from Carter - 2
- more state of the art equipment, more materials of all kinds - 1
- more administrative staff so counselors can actually counsel students - 1
- alternative schools should not be held to same rules and guidelines as traditional schools, specifically enrollment guidelines - 1
- more extra-curricular activities including field trips - 1
- physical education facilities - 1
- make facilities more attractive - 1
- clarify and enforce attendance and tardiness policies - 1
- need to have consistent expectations or structure from room to room - 1
- bring in more blue collar people to whom students can relate on career day - 1
- strong discipline - 1
- counseling and special training for staff - 1

Contemporary Learning Center

- need more teachers/too many students per class for self-paced program - 18
- more counselors/support personnel for students - 10
- alternative schools should not be held to same rules and guidelines as traditional schools, especially enrollment guidelines - 6
- audio/visual equipment for each department - 5
- more positive, individual attention - 5
- improve attendance - 4
- more extra-curricular activities including field trips and speakers - 4
- make facility more attractive and up-to-date - 4
- better student selection process to make sure students can work in this setting - 4
- need more instructional materials - 3
- more funding in general - 3
- students need more access to computers - 3
- more in-services or workshops for teachers to learn to deal with special children - 3
- need more teacher aides for difficult to handle classes - 2
- more parental involvement - 2
- stop making this a dumping ground for students - 2
- more public recognition and understanding of CLC's purpose and goals - 2
- need more variety of materials for remedial students - 2

- consistent commitment and adherence to rules by staff - 2
- more programs with integrated vocational skills - 2
- need to motivate students to succeed in school - 2
- need a Substance Abuse Monitor - 2
- provide school supplies for students who come without them - 1
- allow corporal punishment - 1
- parent-teacher meetings are not successful/need one-on-one meetings - 1
- teachers should teach half day and write curriculum half day to better tailor instruction to students - 1
- more middle school alternative schools - 1
- flex time scheduling for students - 1
- CLC needs a business partner which would act as an entry into the business world for the students - 1
- need more administrative help because of continuous progress paperwork - 1
- hazard pay for teachers - 1
- need resource personnel for developing curriculum - 1
- better organization - 1
- teachers should be better informed of students' background so they can know how to reach them - 1
- reading classes for all students - 1
- more job related classes or clubs for middle school because of over-age students - 1
- more hands on experiences for students - 1
- music program does not work in continuous progress setting - 1
- need satellite campus because distance is a problem - 1
- school bus at the school's disposal for field trips - 1
- expanded library facility - 1
- plastic chairs instead of folding chairs - 1
- art class needs to be with rest of school-too isolated - 1
- tighter security - 1
- need better, more nutritious meals here because students do not get it at home - 1
- need a fun academic activity during advisory period once a week - 1
- special assignment class for middle school - 1
- ninth grade classes need to be open to middle school students - 1

<u>Foley's Academy</u>

- more space - 6
- more funding in general - 4
- more funding for instructional materials including tapes for foreign language courses - 4
- more public recognition and understanding of alternative schools and of Foley's - 3
- more psychological counseling for students - 3
- building with windows/own building - 2
- computer aided instruction - 2
- more alternative schools - 2
- more funding for extra-curricular activities including field trips - 2
- hazard pay for teachers - 2
- alternative schools should not be held to same rules and guidelines as regular schools - 2
- certificate in psychology for every teacher or training to better understand and identify underlying causes of behavior problems - 2
- IBM compatible computers - 1
- study hall time - 1
- lecture class for Algebra - 1
- physical education facilities - 1

- transportation budget - 1
- better academic counselor - 1
- more student input into development of school - 1
- more parental involvement - 1
- family retreat program - 1
- year round school - 1
- intensive training in assertive discipline for all faculty and staff - 1
- group therapy-stress management for staff on regular basis - 1
- need to build in motivational focus in curriculum - 1
- more variety in course selection because these are academically capable students - 1
- more flexibility but consistency - 1
- emphasis should not just be on getting students ready for college/more emphasis on holding a job - 1
- janitorial service - 1
- need support from downtown businesses - 1
- need child care facilities for students' children in which they would help supervise the children - 1
- need boarding house for homeless students who are attending school - 1

Harper Alternative School

- make facility more attractive and up-to-date - 9
- increased security/better trained security personnel/faster response time from security - 4
- more state of the art equipment/more materials of all kinds - 4
- need consistency/too many changes in guidelines and programs - 3
- stronger discipline/more behavior management - 3
- more job training skills for students - 3
- more alternative schools - 2
- more hands on activities for students - 2
- extensive training for staff concerning students prone to catastrophic behavior - 1
- better communication between parents and staff - 1
- more extra-curricular activities including speakers and field trips - 1
- hazard pay for teachers - 1
- need parenting training for parents of students and students who are parents - 1
- need site based management - 1
- have students help fix up or paint school to develop pride in school - 1
- improve attendance - 1
- everyone should be certified and qualified in their positions - 1
- students need to be more involved in the decision making process - 1
- these students need the best the system has to offer because they need the most - 1
- more individual instruction - 1
- upgrade vocational programs-get rid of VEH and do more vocational education - 1
- students need more intermingling with "regular" kids - 1
- bring library up to date - 1
- need to provide extended day or residential facilities for students to get them out of their homes or neighborhoods - 1
- need more electives for students, e.g., music and art - 1
- need full-time drug dog - 1
- building maintenance classroom is too small - 1
- need follow-up on "Weapons students" once they leave Harper - 1
- more counseling services for weapons students - 1
- continue to have small clusters - 1
- more public recognition and understanding of work being done at Harper - 1

- need an assistant principal - 1
- need smaller classrooms with observation mirrors - 1

Harris County Youth Village

- increase length of time students are at the Youth Village - 5
- more extra-curricular activities including speakers and field trips - 4
- one more science and one more history teacher to keep classes small - 3
- need follow-up on students once they leave the Youth Village - 3
- need more electives for students, e.g., art - 2
- homework and study time - 2
- need library on campus - 2
- need consistency in discipline - 2
- access to the computer lab for all students not just those taking the class - 2
- hazard pay for teachers - 2
- F.T. assistant principal who can deal full-time with discipline and behavioral adjustments - 1
- need to be able to shut things down when they get out of control - 1
- get rid of open classrooms-students are easily distracted - 1
- more ability grouping of students - 1
- more psychological counseling for students - 1
- counselors should help in the academic planning - 1
- all students 7th grade and up should have a semester of a vocational program - 1
- special education students need to be exposed to everything that regular students are exposed to - 1
- more positive reinforcement for the students - 1
- more career development for the students - 1
- more community involvement for role models - 1
- "back teacher" and "back teacher aide" - 1
- need more funds for building materials for vocational classes - 1
- need fiscal site based management - 1
- more faculty unity - 1
- more money for books at different reading levels - 1
- does not make since to give standardized tests to these students - 1
- more public recognition and understanding of work being done at Youth Village - 1
- teachers should get to meet with parents - 1
- in house communication system/radios - 1
- fax machine because the campus is so far removed from administration building -1
- need behavior management training for staff - 1
- more alternative schools - 1

Houston Night High School

- four day schedule because Friday night attendance is poor - 2
- clarify and enforce attendance policy - 2
- child care for student parents would increase attendance - 2
- develop reading classes for all students - 2
- should not be held to guidelines for traditional schools/campus-based management because these students have special needs - 2
- strong emphasis on usage of fundamentals - 1
- speech teacher because oral usage is as poor as written - 1
- H.N.H.S. needs to remain at this campus because they have built up a good clientele - 1
- more contact with parents to improve attendance problems - 1

- support personnel to help solve problems affecting attendance, e.g., child care or personal problems - 1
- free all year round instead of having to pay tuition for summer school - 1
- need vast programs in meta-cognative thinking - 1
- tutoring program before or after classes to make up deficiencies, not RAP - 1
- need flexible school schedules to fit with students' work schedules - 1
- need more security because it is an open campus at night - 1

Kay On-Going

- more classroom space-teachers are sharing rooms - 13
- offer child care provisions or facility because girls are dropping out after delivery - 8
- need homebound teacher for girls during confinement - 6
- need follow up on students once they leave Kay - 5
- need policy on how many students can enter or exit during a particular time period/specific entry and exit times - 5
- relocate facility away from chemical environment - 3
- more teachers because of wide range of skill areas needing to be taught/too many lesson preparations - 3
- stricter policy on excused absences - 3
- more centrally located because travel time can be excessive, picked up very early and returned very late - 2
- more incentives for attendance/improve attendance - 2
- need additional special education class because current class teaches all labels - ED, LD, EMR, trainables - 2
- longer confinement times, 2-3 weeks is not enough - 2
- eliminate free government services after first baby unless good attendance and grades in school - 1
- need job placement assistance for students - 1
- all pregnant teens should go to an alternative school like Kay and not left in home schools for other girls to see that its O.K. - 1
- more furniture that accommodates pregnant teens - 1
- more federal funding - 1
- need F.T. assistant principal - 1
- teachers need additional planning periods to prepare confinement work for students - 1
- more extracurricular activities to increase the amount of social interaction - 1
- more up-to-date computer equipment - 1
- waive confinement period as an absence - 1
- make school day shorter for these girls - 1
- more training for staff on behavior management and at-risk students - 1
- need another social worker - 1
- need a walking track where girls may safely exercise - 1

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